

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 4, and 7 through 38 remain in this case.

The Examiner has objected to Claim 31 as containing an indefinite word, "eath". This word has been cancelled, as the intended word is "each", which was inserted by the prior amendment.

The Examiner objects to the disclosure because "numerous run-on sentences appear in the specification in pages 6-9." In actuality, the sentences in question demonstrate the achievement of the objects of the invention by setting forth the applicable claim language as the claims were originally filed. This is in accordance with standard European practice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection to the specification be withdrawn.

Applicants thank Examiner for the courtesies extended to Applicants' Attorney on December 21, 2005, during a telephone interview, at which time it was pointed out that the objected to claim 2 was actually independent, and did not depend from another claim. Examiner Burd then indicated that the status of claims 2 through 4 and 7 through 10 is that they are allowed, and the Examiner subsequently issued an Interview Summary dated December 23, 2005, confirming this.

The Examiner has now indicated that claims 2-4, 7-10, and 38 are allowed, and that claims 13-19, 24, 26, 28-29, and 31-37 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten to include the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

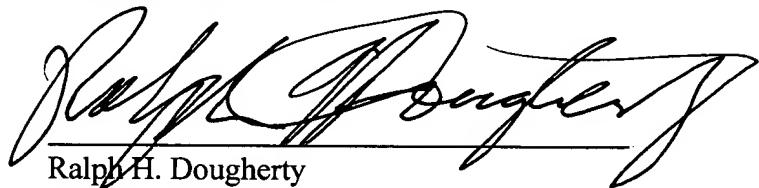
Claims 1, 11, 12, 20-23, 25, 27, and 30 stand rejected as anticipated by Segal US Patent 6,647,069. However, it is noted that the priority date of the present application is August 18, 1998, claiming priority from German Patent Application No. 19837426.7, and the filing date of the Segal Patent is April 30, 1999, claiming priority from Provisional Application Nos. 60/083,934 and 60/083,952, both filed May 1, 1998. Applicants do not know whether the pertinent teachings of the Segal patent on which the Examiner relies are present in either of the Provisional Applications, as we have been unable to obtain a copy of either Provisional Application to date. Thus, Applicants challenge the effective date of the teachings of Segal, and Applicants respectfully request that the Segal reference and the rejections based thereon be withdrawn.

On the basis that the Segal reference is not an effective reference in this case, it is submitted that claims 1 through 4 and 7 through 38 are not anticipated by the Segal reference within the meaning of 35 USC 102.

Since the amendment to the claims does not add more claims than previously paid for, no additional claim fee is required.

In view of the foregoing amendment and these remarks, this application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and such favorable action is respectfully requested on behalf of Applicants.

Respectfully submitted,



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